

*At a General Meeting of the ROMAN CATHOLICS of the County and City of
CORK, convened by public Advertisements, held at the CORK TAVERN, the 15th
OCTOBER, 1792.*

The following DECLARATION was unanimously agreed to :

(JUSTIN M^c CARTHY, Esq. M. D. in the Chair.)

WE, the Roman Catholics of the County and City of Cork, compelled by the menaces and intimidations which are daily repeated and renewed in the public Prints, to deviate from that rule of silent expectation we had prescribed to ourselves, think it our duty at this crisis, to interfere, and rescue from opprobrium the character of that Body, of which we form no inconsiderable portion.

We embrace the occasion of testifying our entire approbation and concurrence in the sentiments expressed by our oppressed Brethren throughout the Kingdom; like them we are loyal, attached to our Country and to the Constitution which it possesses; like them, inflexibly determined to seek by all peaceable and legal means, that participation in the Elective Franchise, which we are qualified to enjoy by our situation, patriotism, and property.

As the inhabitants of an extensive County, and great commercial City, we cannot stigmatize too strongly the unguarded conduct of those persons, probably not much interested in the national welfare, who, by angry resolutions of resistance, where no attack was designed, or even to be apprehended, and by dangerous confederations, which there is no pretence to justify, have diffused vague conjectures through Ireland and foreign countries, interrupting at home the public tranquillity and the harmony of social life, representing us abroad in a condition of precarious settlement. We see the spirit of intolerance, observable in those proceedings, with astonishment, in an age which is denominated enlightened, and among a people who have laid a claim to the praise of information and liberality.

We never can admit, that the exclusion of three-fourths of the People from any connection with the Legislature, which disposes of their lives, their liberty, and fortunes, is an essential and fundamental principle in the organization of society within this Island. The disfranchisement of a large portion of the Irish people was the temporary expedient of a distempered age:—it is time it should be cancelled. It is time the privilege of voting for Representatives should be re-annexed to our freehold property; and suffrage become what the Constitution designed it, the protection and reward of industry.

The good of the country, the liberality of the age, the security our property affords, the proofs and the pledges we have given of patriotism and loyalty, all call aloud for a happy reconciliation of parties, grounded upon this act of substantial justice.

The enemies of that great good of Ireland, our emancipation, endeavour to divert the public mind from this discussion, and to overwhelm our calm representation in the outcry of sedition. They are aware that, supported by reason and justice, if our Protestant countrymen shall investigate our cause, we must triumph over the base views and prejudices of the interested and bigotted; but we call our Protestant friends and neighbours to judge us, not from exaggerations and calumnies, but by their personal observation; by the general tenor of our lives and conduct; by the duties which we fulfil in common. Is there any room for the unkind surmises which circulate? Are there no terms upon which we may hope to be restored to our country?—In the general havoc of our rights, remonstrance, petition, and discussion were preserved. We use them with that deference to the existing laws, and attention the public peace, which befits men connected by every endearing tie to their country. Will any honest man lay his hand upon his breast

and answer, is our conduct disorderly? Is our mode of address indecent? Are our grievances fictitious? In every pursuit we are intercepted by monopoly; we are deprived of all that is called enviable in political life, and of many solid advantages of society. When we enquire the cause of this exclusion, we are denominated seditious.

We have a strong cause;—it requires but the aid of Argument, and this auxiliary *alone* we will employ:—We solicit from our Protestant countrymen a patient hearing, that we may demonstrate to them, that by redressing our grievances, they serve our common Country, and do not endanger their establishment. We have no means of procuring redress, but by impressing conviction upon the Protestant representatives of Protestant constituents.

For us stands all that is illustrious in the land for talent and public spirit! The men who encourage venality, and trade in corruption, are arrayed against us. It may be convenient to such persons to limit the number of free agents within the realm; but will the sensible and disinterested Protestants of Ireland be deceived by their unfounded assertions, their unsubstantiated charges, and fanciful hypotheses? Will they credit that they would innovate in prosperity, who in adversity are moderate and submissive?—Will they believe that we have an alien hope, who have appeared in every hour of peril armed by their sides for our common protection, and who have within the period of their recollection, resisted the only powers on earth whom we could be supposed to favour? Will they not rather attend to the evidence of their senses, that as the past repeal of the Popery Laws has been the cause of national prosperity, so by the future must our country flourish? That it is more politic to recompense by franchise the toil of the laborious, than the perjury of the profligate. These are the sound doctrines of every wise statesman and eminent writer of either kingdom; opposed to them are the men who inculcate the dangerous lesson, that the Church, the State, the Crown, the Empire, and the Constitution must totter, unless they have for supporters a famished Slave and an arrogant Monopolist.

We are threatened, if we persist in our purpose, not only with an exclusion from future favours, but likewise with a revocation of past relaxations of penalties inflicted without a crime; the former openly avowed, the latter covertly insinuated. But this sentence of eternal and even of retroactive proscription, tho' backed by some untimely proffers of lives and fortunes, has no effect on our conduct, because we conceive that to the Legislature alone it is competent to menace or to proscribe; and that for one fellow-subject to threaten to limit the rights of another, is to assume a power that to him does not belong:—a species of political assault unwarranted either by the Law or the Constitution.

To the Patriots who stood forward our advocates in the Senate, and to those who supported our cause without, we return our warmest thanks; and our acknowledgments and gratitude are particularly due to the late Grand Jury of this City, who resisting the contagion of evil example, have declined entering into the confederacy attempted to be formed for the purpose of riveting our chains, and detaining us in bondage; as well as to the enlightened and spirited Protestant Freeholders, who, by their resolutions of the 8th instant, have patronized our claims, and rescued this great and respectable County from the stigma of Bigotry, and the spirit of Monopoly.

JUSTIN M^c CARTHY, Chairman.

Signed by a most respectable number of Country Gentlemen of landed Property and wealthy Citizens.

*** It remains at Mr. FLYN's, Printer, for the Signatures of such as could not attend the Meeting.